

which certain life forms are, supposedly, intended for the use of others, e.g., plants being intended for animal consumption and animals being intended for human consumption. However, David Hume and Charles Darwin have made it difficult to develop the argument in this way without an embarrassed smile. Perhaps because of this, the offending reference to natural purpose is today usually replaced by a phrase like "the natural order of things:" big fish eat little fish, and as the most powerful species on this planet, we are simply carrying on the natural order of things by using other species for our benefit.

However, whether we develop this idea from a teleological or an evolutionary perspective, what we are defending is the practice of the stronger routinely sacrificing the interests of the weaker for their (the stronger's) benefit. Today, such practice is not considered fair in dealings among humans, to put it mildly. This was not always the case, for humans-over-animals is not the only "natural hierarchy" that has been proposed. Aristotle thought that men were naturally superior to women, and Victorians thought

white men had to shoulder the burden of being superior to savages. We have come to reject these and many other supposedly natural hierarchies; the history of what we consider moral progress can be viewed as, in large part, the replacement of hierarchical worldviews with a presumption in favor of forms of egalitarianism. This substitution places the burden of proof on those who would deny equal consideration to the interests of all concerned. Consequently, some reason is needed to justify the fairness of maintaining a hierarchical worldview when we are dealing with animals.

Calling the humans-over-animals hierarchy "natural" will not suffice. The long history of our conquest and enslavement of other humans indicates that it is also "natural" for us to engage in these discriminatory practices with other people. If its being natural is not sufficient reason morally to justify our conquering and enslaving other people, then its being natural is not sufficient morally to justify our consuming animals.

Furthermore, as John Rawls has noted, one of the primary purposes of principles of justice is to correct "the arbitrariness of this world." [10] "Arbitrariness" here refers, among other things, to the great differences in power that occur naturally among people. To protect the weak against the strong among us is one of the primary reasons we develop principles of justice. But there are also great differences in power between us and animals, differences of which we take advantage in order to consume them. Since "the arbitrariness of this world" is not limited to the human condition and intra-human relations, it would seem to follow that since correcting such arbitrariness is a fundamental moral concern, we should develop principles of justice to protect animals from our taking unfair advantage of their weakness. At the very least, since principles of fairness are intended to work against the natural order of the stronger benefiting by sacrificing the weaker, simply intoning "But it's the natural order of things!" cannot (logically) show why morality should not work against the humans-over-animals hierarchy.

It could be objected, following something like the logic of Rawls' analysis of justice, particularly his proposed "original position," that moral concern with the inter-

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The men were gentle, the women strong
And the children knew no wrong.
The young shared fears and longings
And all their dreams.
There was no separation of one soul
From another; all was one in spirit.
The elders gave the oral histories
Of past lives, past ancestors
Birthing the living whole
Of their eternal present.
They could recall lives past
That were not in human form
And foretold of future lives
That were beyond the realm
Of this time and place
Yet were being born therein.
So they lived in that dimension
Of clear vision where space and time
Made one eternal present
In the all-abiding mind.
The first words shared
Gave names to things experienced
And in this naming
Came the knowing of Nature,
And the deepening of the self.